Sweet
Inspiration
Cilla

Sweet Inspiration
(Original Release Date:
3 July 1970)

AN INTERVIEW WITH CILLA

Cilla glances at the cover sleeve for 'Sweet Inspiration'.
I was so proud of this cover shot as it was not long after I had my nose done so I wanted to show it off.

So that is what inspired the styling of the cover then?
Yes!

What about the songs?
I see 'Oh Pleasure Man' is on there, that was written by Cook/Greenaway and I was pregnant with Robert at this time, very pregnant!

I recall the Queen had never seen a TV show being made and she came with the Duke of Edinburgh and I created a little bit of history; because the Queen, up until then, had never knowingly been presented to a pregnant woman! So, as I was very, very pregnant they had to ask permission from the palace. She could have met me if I hadn't of been showing but I was almost dropping by this time. It was actually an unfortunate song to sing because it was "Oh pleasure man I've done it again..." [Cilla chuckles]. So, I know this song was before I had Robert!

Oh and 'Across The Universe' that was a great song but a hard one to do!

You also covered a German folk song 'Det Gatfulla Folket' which we know as 'Mysterious People'.
Yes. Ronnie Hazlehurst did that. I must have done that one on my BBC show for Ronnie to do the arrangement. 'Cause he was the arranger on all of my BBC TV shows. So, he might well have suggested I do that one.

I love the Jackie DeShannon 'Put A Little Love In Your Heart', I love that one! Also I love 'Both Sides Now' by Joni Mitchell, I adore her. Then, there was 'Rule Britannia' that was an unusual one.

So how did that closing track come about?
Oh we had a bit of time at the end of the session and it was just a bit of fun.

You certainly showed off your vocal range on that track!
Yes I know. George [Martin] told me everything to do for that and that really was just using up time. We've got the musicians so let's make them work for their money and everybody knows 'Rule Britannia'. So, it was just one of those things.

What about Black Paper Roses?
I love that one. I am not so sure I picked it.

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Do you remember anything about the song 'On A Street Called Hope'? You recorded it for this album but it was left off the finished record. We're adding this as a bonus track to the album re-issue. Gene Pitney actually released a version as a single.

Gene didn't do easy songs as he had an enormous big range. I remember the session and that it was also written by Cook/Greenaway. They were great friends and they did 'Something Tells Me' for me. I actually had a couple of hits with them. I remember it being really very hard to sing. I don't think I ever would have done it with the intention for it to be a single but just an album track. But I am not sure why it didn't make the album. It would actually be very interesting to hear that one again as I know it was so hard to sing!

Actually, they never gave me easy songs to sing! George Martin was always really stretching me. Because I didn't understand or read music I just felt gosh I oughta be doing this because he tells me I can. Never thinking can you take this a notch down a bit.

By the time of making this album, your TV work was starting to take precedence over your singing career. Did it start also to influence the songs which made it onto your albums?

Oh probably yes! Quite a lot! 'Aquarius' and that infamous dance routine is an example of that (Read Cilla's recollections of this song in the digital booklet for 'Surround Yourself With Cilla').

Would that be down to Michael Hurll (executive producer of the BBC TV 'Cilla' show)?

It would be down to what fitted the show and what was good at the time and what I liked at the time. I was very much my own person.

Interview conducted by Stephen Munns in June 2009

For more information on Cilla Black's life and career, please visit www.cillablack.com.

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01. SWEET INSPIRATION
Written by John Cameron
Arranged and Conducted by Ian Green
Recorded 3 November 1969

02. PUT A LITTLE LOVE IN YOUR HEART
Written by Jimmy Holiday, Randy Myers & Jackie DeShannon
Arranged and Conducted by Ian Green
Recorded 03 November 1969

03. THE APRIL FOOLS
(from film of same name)
Written by Burt Bacharach & Hal David. Arranged and Conducted by George Martin
Recorded 3 November 1969

04. I CAN'T GO ON LIVING WITHOUT YOU
Written by Elton John & Bernie Taupin. Arranged and Conducted by Mike Vickers
Recorded 18 May 1969

05. FROM BOTH SIDES NOW
Written by Joni Mitchell
Arranged and Conducted by Les Williams
Recorded 7 January 1970

06. ACROSS THE UNIVERSE
Written by John Lennon & Paul McCartney. Arranged and Conducted by Mike Vickers
Recorded 16 March 1970

07. BLACK PAPER ROSES
Written by Belle Gonzalez
Arranged and Conducted by Mike Vickers
Recorded 28 September 1969

08. MYSTERIOUS PEOPLE
(Det Gatfulla Folket)
Written by Olle Adolphson & Hal Shaper
Arranged and Conducted by Ronnie Hazelhurst
Recorded 7 January 1970

09. DEAR MADAME
Written by Les Reed & Geoff Stephens. Arranged and Conducted by Mike Vickers
Recorded 15 January 1970

10. OH PLEASURE MAN
Written by Roger Cook, Roger Greenaway, Albert Hammond & Mike Hazlewood
Arranged and Conducted by Mike Vickers
Recorded 15 January 1970

11. LITTLE PLEASURE ACRE
Written by Roger Greenaway & Roger Cook. Arranged and Conducted by Lou Warburton
Recorded 11 May 1969

12. FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE
Written by Orlando Murden & Ron Miller. Arranged and Conducted by Mike Vickers
Recorded 11 May 1969

13. RULE BRITANNIA
Written by Thomas Augustine Arne
Arranged and Conducted by Mike Vickers
Recorded 28 September 1969

14. ON A STREET CALLED HOPE
NON-ALBUM / BONUS TRACK
Written by Roger Greenaway & Roger Cook
Recorded 11 May 1969

15. FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE
[2009 STRIPPED DOWN MIX] PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED / BONUS TRACK
Written by Orlando Murden & Ron Miller. Arranged and Conducted by Mike Vickers
Recorded 11 May 1969

16. BLACK PAPER ROSES
[2009 STRIPPED DOWN MIX] PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED / BONUS TRACK
Written by Belle Gonzalez
Arranged and Conducted by Mike Vickers
Recorded 28 September 1969

All Recordings Produced by George Martin
Tracks 15 & 16 mixed March/April 2009 by Ted Carfrae at TCM Music Studio (www.tcmmusic.com)
Album Cover Photograph by Caroline Arber

2009 RE-ISSUE CREDITS:

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GEORGE MARTIN MESSAGE:

When I first met Cilla in 1963 she was just a teenager, but with a tremendous ambition to make a mark in the recording world. Looking back at all the records we made together I realise that her Song Book is such a major part of my life. We hit it off from the very first moment we worked together on her debut single 'Love Of The Loved' (1963) for Parlophone.

I continued thereafter to produce every Cilla Black single and album until the early seventies. It goes without saying that I do have many happy memories of these immensely creative and busy times we shared. Many of the songs from these recording sessions demonstrated Cilla's courage and natural ability in tackling new challenges from all parts of the music world. I will never forget the moment she recorded 'Alfie' with Burt Bacharach. It must have been a nerve wracking experience to sing for him but she turned in a great performance which I know he appreciated enormously.

It is wonderful to know that such a great lady of song is being saluted by the very record label which launched her career 45 years ago. The re-issues [on digital-download] of all of Cilla's original studio albums showcase a truly versatile and multi-faceted recording artist who is undoubtedly one of the greats of British pop music.

George

Sir George Martin
(Cilla's Record Producer, 1963-73; his production credits include The Beatles, Gerry & The Pacemakers, Shirley Bassey etc.)